

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

FIGS. 3 and 4 illustrate the individual components of the adjustable pier 22 in more detail. The lower support member 28 includes a base 39 and a vertically extending sidewall 41. Sidewall 41 has a first end 43 and a second end 45, with first end 43 being spaced beneath second end 45. Base 39 has an upper surface 47 and a lower surface 49. Base 39 and sidewall 41 define[[s]] an internal chamber 34 which receives at least a portion of the upper support member 30. Upper surface 47 of base 39 is exposed to internal chamber 34, and first end 43 of sidewall 41 terminates at upper surface 47. The lower support member 28 defines a pair of upwardly extending grooves 36 in opposite, inwardly facing surfaces adjacent the internal chamber 34. The upper support member 30 presents a pair of projections 38 on opposite, outwardly facing sides of the upper support member 30. It is preferred for the upwardly extending grooves 36 in lower support member 28 to extend linearly a distance of at least 6", more preferably at least 12", while the projections 38 in upper support member 30 extend linearly a distance of at least 3", more preferably at least 6". When the upper support member 30 is received in the internal chamber 34 of the lower support member 28, the projections 38 are slidably received in the grooves 36 to thereby permit upward translational shifting of the upper support member 30 relative to the lower member 28, while restraining relative non-translational shifting (i.e., tilting or rotating) of the lower and upper support members 28,30. Thus, the lower and upper support members 28,30 are telescopically intercoupled. As used herein, "telescopically intercoupled" denotes the coupling of two members where (1) one member is at least partly received in the other member, (2) the members can translate/slide axially relative to one another, (3) relative axial rotation of the members is not required to cause relative axial shifting of the members, and (4) relative axial rotation of the members is substantially inhibited. It is preferred for the telescopic intercoupling of the lower and upper support members 28,30 to be accomplished without threadably intercoupling the lower and upper support members 28,30. Further, it is preferred for lower and upper support members 28,30 to be axially shiftable relative to one another without requiring a screwing/unscrewing action of any member that is physically

coupled to or integrated with the adjustable pier 22. It is preferred for lower and upper support members 28,30 to be formed primarily of concrete.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

Referring again to FIGS. 3 and 4, it is preferred for the lower support member 28 to define [[an]] a lateral access[[es]] opening 56 which permits lateral access to at least a lower portion 58 of the internal channel 34. As used herein, the term "lateral access" shall mean physical access to a certain region from the side of that region, as opposed to access from the top or bottom of the region. Lateral access opening 56 is located between first end 43 and second end 45 of sidewall 41. In one embodiment, the height of access opening 56 is equal to the distance between first end 43 and second end 45 of sidewall 41. Lateral access to the internal chamber 34 is important because such lateral access is needed for inserting a mechanical stop mechanism 60 (shown in FIGS. 1 and 4) into the internal chamber 34 below the bottom of the upper support member 30. The stop mechanism 60 is disposed between and directly contacts the lower and upper support members 28,30. Thus, when the stop mechanism 60 is properly inserted in the internal chamber 34, downward shifting of the upper support member 30 relative to the lower support member 28 is prevented. If extension of the adjustable pier 22 is desired, a taller stop mechanism 60 can be employed. If retraction of adjustable pier 22 is desired, a shorter stop mechanism 60 can be employed.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 24 with the following amended paragraph:

In order to provide easy lateral access to the internal chamber (especially when a curable grout is employed as the stop mechanism 60), it is preferred for the width of the access opening 56 to be at least 50% of the maximum width of the upper support member 30, more preferably at least 75% of the maximum width of the upper support member 30. Preferably, the access opening 56 is at least 2" wide, more preferably at least 6" wide, and most preferably 8"-24" wide. Further, in order to provide easy access to the internal chamber 34 and to permit a sufficient

range of extension of the adjustable pier 22, it is preferred for the height of the access opening 56 to be at least 50% of the maximum height of the upper support member 30, more preferably at least 75% of the maximum height of the upper support member 30. Preferably, the access opening 56 is at least 6" high, more preferably at least 12" high, and most preferably 18"-96" high. In an alternative embodiment, a plurality of smaller, vertically-spaced access openings can be employed to provide lateral access to the internal channel 34. In another embodiment, the stop mechanism 60 is a permanently rigid structure/~~member~~ (as opposed to a curable grout which transforms from a slurry phase to a rigid phase during curing) that can be readily inserted into and removed from the internal channel 34 in its rigid form. Examples of such a permanently rigid structure include a block of wood, a cinder block, and a piece of metal.